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## STUDENT REPORT

GREAT WARRIOR: MOSHE DAYAN

MAJOR DAVID M. JACOBS

84-1355

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Jacobs was commissioned in 1969 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program. He has held a variety of supervisory and command positions in aircraft maintenance at CONUS and overseas locations. Most recently, he was commander of the 3380th OMSq at Keesler AFB, Ms. He has performed temporary duty assignments in the Middle East. Major Jacobs has attended Squadron Officer's School and Air Command and Staff College. He holds a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Utah.

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## Chapter One

### MOSHE DAYAN

Moshe Dayan's childhood was marked by adversity. He was born on May 14, 1915 in Deganiah, the first kibbutz in Palestine. His parents were Ukranian Jews as were the twenty odd other members of the farm settlement. These people, for the most part, were not farmers and endured considerable hardship working the marshy land near the Sea of Gallilee. Illness was pervasive. Dayan's father suffered from malaria; his mother, kidney ailments; and young Dayan was plagued with chronic eye infections.

As a youth, Dayan had much exposure to the Arabs. He spoke fluent Arabic. Despite the Arab marauding his kibbutz often experienced, Dayan reported that:

My own attitude to our Arab neighbors was always positive and friendly. I like their way of life and I respected them as hard workers devoted to the land and to our common natural environment. I had no doubt that it was possible to live at peace with them . . . (2:34).

Dayan's attitude towards, and knowledge of the Arabs would profoundly shape his later military and political life.

Dayan's first serious military experience occurred in 1937 during the "Arab revolt" when he became a guide for the British Mandatory government police force. His duties were to guide and serve as a translator for a Scottish regiment assigned to protect the Iraq Petroleum Company oil pipeline from Arab saboteurs.

The British troops, however, were not effective in halting attacks on the pipeline. Dayan learned from this experience that the only way to fight saboteurs ". . . was to seize the initiative, attack them in their bases, and surprise them when they were on the move" (2:41).

During this period, Dayan met Captain Orde Wingate, who later won acclaim as a general in Burma during WWII. Wingate taught Dayan his unorthodox methods of warfare which he had developed earlier in Sudan. Specifically, Wingate emphasized night attacks using terrain and cover to achieve surprise and initiative. Dayan served under Wingate in a number of successful operations against terrorist gangs, and became an ardent admirer of Wingate.

Dayan's early experiences with the Arabs and the British army set the stage for his impressive military and political career. In the 1948 War for Independence he commanded a highly successful commando battalion. Promoted to Major General, he became Israeli Chief of Staff in 1953. He left the military in 1957 to become Minister of Agriculture. Dayan was dramatically recalled by public outcry in 1967 to become Minister of Defense on the eve of the Six Day War. He resigned his office after the 1973 Yom Kippur War in the face of public denunciation for heavy Israeli casualties. Dayan was recalled, again, in 1977 to become Foreign Minister and conduct peace negotiations with the Egyptians. He resigned this office in 1979 in protest over Israeli plans to impose Israeli sovereignty on the West Bank. He died in 1981.

Dayan was a complex personality marked by contradictions.



Though he received little formal education, he authored a book on the Old Testament and several others on Israeli military campaigns and the Egyptian peace negotiations. Though a military officer, he was a political liberal in his attitude towards social issues in general and the Arabs, in particular. Though raised in a strict religious environment, his brazen disregard for Israeli morality in pursuing women was a national scandal. In short, he was a detached, aloof, unapproachable person who defies comprehension.

## Chapter Two

### WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE

"How beautiful was this day, May 14," an Arab Legion officer said, "when the whole world held its breath anticipating the entry of seven Arab armies into Palestine to redeem it from the Zionists and the West" (5:315). So it was. At eight o'clock that morning the British terminated their thirty year mandatory rule over Palestine. By that afternoon the entire country was at war as Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion proclaimed Israel's independence.

Israel had no regular army to meet the invading forces. The country did, however, have a well organized underground force of some 30,000 men. This ill-equipped force evolved in less than a year to an organized army of nearly 100,000 (5:339). The Israeli's never did have superiority in either numbers or equipment over the Arabs. Their most important asset was the "dedication and military experience of their troops. . ." (5:317).

In contrast, the Arab forces consisted of 10,000 Egyptians, 8,000 Iraqis, 7,000 Syrians, 4,500 Arab Legionaires, and 3,500 Lebanese troops (5:318-320). These forces were equipped with ample weaponry to include tanks and aircraft. These advantages were offset by the dubious motivation of the soldiers and the lackluster leadership of the officers. The best of the group,

by far, were the British led Jordanian Arab Legionnaires.

Another factor that hampered the Arab forces was their lack of coordination. Though their announced objective was to drive the Israelis out of Palestine, the leaders did not trust each other and each was pursuing his territorial conquest. As a result, the Arabs were unable to consolidate their gains and maintain the initiative. This was evident in even the first engagement of the war, the Syrian invasion of Gallilee on May 15th.

The Syrian force swept through the region with ease. They had a force of 45 tanks and over two hundred armored vehicles plus air support (5:319). The Syrians overran a large farm settlement and proceeded to attack Deganiah, Moshe Dayan's birthplace. Dayan assumed command and organized the kibbutz into a defense force. Dayan dug trenches and prepared for the assault. At dawn the next morning the Syrians began artillery shelling. They then initiated their attack with infantry and tanks. "The Syrians advanced according to the book, tanks flanked by infantry," Dayan reported (2:91). Dayan, at that very moment, assembled an ancient field piece that had just arrived from overseas. As the lead tanks penetrated the kibbutz perimeter, Dayan readied the gun to fire. He scored a direct hit on the lead tank. The Syrians, startled by the presence of artillery, fled in panic, abandoning their vehicles, weapons and conquered territory (5:319).

As Dayan then retraced the path of the Syrian forces he observed, "Much young blood had been shed, the blood not of trained and veteran warriors, but of youngsters meeting death wide-eyed.

All knew. . .There could be no retreat and no surrender" (2:92).

The Syrian threat was thus neutralized. The advances of the Egyptian army and Arab Legionaires were another matter. The Egyptians had launched a two pronged attack across the Negev Desert. One force advanced along the coastal road to Tel Aviv. The other column headed for Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the Legionaires mounted a strong, determined siege on Jerusalem and poised another force at Lydda, merely seven miles from Tel Aviv.

Dayan was assigned the mission of leading a commando battalion against two Legion strong points near Tel Aviv. He struck swiftly at these points in a frontal assault and withdrew leaving a small force behind to scuffle with the Legionaires. Dayan was impatient. He wanted decisive action. He decided to attack the main Legion force at the large, well-fortified city of Lydda. To attack this city frontally "held no chance of success" observed Dayan (2:106). However, an attack from the east, the enemies own resupply route, would achieve surprise, and perhaps success. He led his column of jeeps into the city from the east and caught the Legionaires unaware.

Barreling through the main street at full speed, machine guns firing, Dayan's troops sent the Legionaires fleeing. With this sledgehammer operation, the Jews eliminated any remaining threat to the Tel Aviv area (5:331).

Despite the missions success, Dayan's superior, Major General Yigael Yadin, was not impressed. Dayan's action had been more of a prank, than a military operation. Dayan reported:

He did not agree with my implied thesis that the way to get past the first line of enemy positions was through the fast and daring dash. To him, an attack should be planned and carried out methodically. . . (2:113).

Nevertheless, Yadin gave Dayan another mission. He was to command one of three battalions in the final campaign of the war--to drive the Egyptians from the Negev desert. This was the last Arab force to remain on Israeli territory. Yigael Allon, the senior Israeli commander in the Negev, wanted to attack the key Egyptian stronghold there. However, only one road approached this heavily fortified position and losses would be very heavy with success doubtful in such a narrow frontal assault.

Allon learned from archeological maps that the Romans had built a road approaching the fort from the opposite direction of the existing road. They excavated likely sites in the desert and found the road. Under the cover of darkness, they advanced a column up the roadbed and attacked the rear side of the fort. The astonished Egyptians had their tanks deployed in the other direction; and their artillery was aimed for an attack up the existing road. With the advantages of surprise and initiative, the Israelis prevailed. The Egyptians negotiated and later signed an armistice agreement.

Meanwhile, Dayan's battalion had overrun the Egyptian position at a nearby airfield in the manner he had used previously--he broke through the front into their rear and they surrendered. This tactic cost Dayan dearly in losses this time though. He and his force got trapped by a ravine and had to endure shelling while they leveled the ravine walls with shovels to get across (2:119).

Dayan exemplified the tactics and mode of operation that achieved victory for the Israelis in the War for Independence.

The disadvantages under which the Israeli Army operated. . . its weakness in manpower, its lack of modern weapons and the necessity to fight on many fronts at the same time--evolved a military philosophy based on flexibility, the use of surprise and innovation (3:107).

Dayan employed, as did other Israeli commanders, night attacks to neutralize, to a degree, Arab advantages. Also, Israeli commanders displayed a:

flexibility of thought that encouraged the leader in battle to adapt himself to the vicissitudes of war at a moments notice and to take advantage of changing circumstances in the field (3:107).

## Chapter Three

### THE SUEZ CAMPAIGN 1956

In the spring of 1956, Gamel Abdul Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal and created a world crisis. Prior to that he had closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping. Negotiations and diplomatic moves in the United Nations had continued through the summer and into October with no success. Nasser had ordered the UN peacekeeping forces out of the Sinai and moved in his own. He had also set about organizing the other Arab countries to join in a war with Israel to regain their honor lost by their defeat in 1948 (5:488).

Major General Moshe Dayan, now Israeli Chief of Staff, was deeply concerned by Nasser's threatening actions. Nasser had openly supported terrorist raids from bases in the Gaza Strip (1:17). His closure of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping was in violation of the 1948 armistice and was seriously impacting on Israeli trade. Dayan advocated preemptive military action to resolve the issues (2:183). However, he and other leaders recognized that preemptive military action on Israel's part would be disastrous politically until all diplomatic efforts had taken their course.

Throughout this period, the British and French governments were alarmed by Nasser's control of the canal and his overtures

towards the Soviets. They could, however, for political reasons do little more than attempt to negotiate with Nasser.

It was against this backdrop that on Oct 22, 1956, Dayan secretly visited France to propose a plan for joint military action (5:451). Dayan's plan was for Israel to stage a military action in the vicinity of the Suez Canal. This action could be construed as posing a threat to safe shipping on the waterway and hence, justify British and French intervention (5:492).

This plan provided the French and British the pretext they needed to secure the canal. Also, it served two important purposes for the Israelis; first, Israel would not be "out in the cold" alone as an aggressor; second, Egyptian forces would be compelled to deal with the British and French. This would lessen the forces Israel would find in opposition.

Israeli intentions as set forth by Dayan were to create:

. . . a threat to the Suez Canal in accordance with our commitment in the plan, and then came the two basic objectives of the campaign--the capture of the Straits of Tiran and the defeat of the Egyptian forces (2:234).

Dayan further noted that:

In the state of affairs that existed between Israel and her neighbors, it was best to shed as little blood as possible. I therefore established that our aim was "to confound the military array of the Egyptian forces and bring about their collapse." This meant that our army was to seize the cross roads, dominating emplacements, and key fortifications which would give us control of the area and thereby compel the enemy to surrender (2:234).

Dayan's strategy to achieve these objectives was daring



and engendered any number of heated confrontations with his subordinate commanders. Specifically, the key points of his plan were: First, he ordered a battalion of paratroops to be airdropped near the Mitla Pass on the night of Oct 29, 1956. This placed a powerful Israeli force in Egyptian territory within thirty miles of the Suez Canal. Dayan's estimate was that this airdrop would appear to the Egyptians as nothing more than a retaliatory raid for terrorist attacks, and therefore, not cause alarm to the Egyptians.

Second, Dayan delayed mobilization of the reserves until 72 hours prior to the main force attack. He let it be "leaked" that the mobilization was in preparation for action against Jordan for providing a safe haven for terrorists. Again, Dayan hoped not to alarm the Egyptians. "The Egyptian military reacted to this first phase as I had expected," Dayan observed. "They simply did not exploit their advantage of massive superiority in Russian arms and equipment and their much larger Air Force, equipped with the latest Soviet jet fighters and bombers" (2:238).

Finally, twenty four hours after the paratroops had been dropped, Dayan launched the main attack. It was a three pronged invasion of the Sinai. One force attacked the major Egyptian fortifications at Al-Quesseima and Abu-Agheila. Another force, in the south, attacked Al-Quintilla. Meanwhile, the final force thrust passed the Gaza Strip, isolating it from reinforcements, to Al-Arish on the coast.

To Dayan, the most important objective of this campaign was the capture of Sharm-el-Sheikh, the heavily defended city on

the southernmost point of the Sinai peninsula, from which the Egyptians were blockading the Gulf of Aquaba to Israeli shipping (2:255). Again, it was important that the Egyptians not recognize his intentions and further reinforce the city. With such intense action in the northern Sinai, the Egyptians paid scant attention to reports from their outposts of an Israeli force traveling along the northern shore of Aquaba to Sharm-el-Sheikh. The Egyptians believed the desert in that area to be impassable by anything other than the camel patrols they utilized. Nevertheless, the Israeli 9th Brigade was arduously making its way across this "impassable" trail with over 200 armored vehicles. The paratroop battalion, which had been dropped earlier was making its way at full speed southward to Sharm-el-Sheikh.

Dayan considered speed and initiative paramount in employing his forces. He assigned his forces independent axes of advance, so each force could press forward as swiftly as the situation allowed. He disdained the thought of a battalion being held up waiting for another force to join it. Speed in advance and in the mobilization were strategies not without their problems. On several occasions Israeli armored units engaged each other and inflicted damage. Also, the Israeli Air Force, on one occasion, destroyed a number of tanks from one of their own units. These incidents occurred because the forces were assembled and employed hastily. Perhaps, because of such incidents Dayan felt compelled to explain at length the justification for such haste (1:204-206).

As Dayan explains, "The real military problem which faced her (Israel's) army in Sinai was not how to overcome the Egyptian

forces, but how to do so within the restrictive political framework. . ." (i.e. achieving her objectives before the Soviets could obtain a UN cease fire resolution against Israel.)

Such misadventures and obstacles were inevitable once everything centered on speed--and speed was integral to the solution adopted by the Israeli Army to meet its military and political problems (2:205).

Problems withstanding, Dayan's orchestration of the Sinai Campaign was a:

brilliant application of the strategy of the indirect approach. Captain Sir Basil Liddell Hart, who coined this strategy, characterized the opening moves in the Sinai as one of the most brilliant applications of such an approach in the history of warfare--he considered the Sinai plan to have been a "work of art" (3:141).

Perhaps more significant in this campaign than his strategy was Dayan's insistence on officer leadership. Dayan had insisted that officers set the example and personally lead under fire (5:479). This was done, and done fully and well, thus setting the standard for future Israeli military actions (3:141).

## Chapter Four

### THE SIX DAY WAR

On the 22nd of May 1967, Nasser closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping and, thus, set into motion the third Arab-Israeli war. He called on the Arab states to join him in the destruction of Israel. Within days, the Israelis found themselves encircled by the 250,000 troops, over 2,000 tanks and more than 700 front line aircraft of the Arab nations (3:149). The Israelis had mobilized their reserves but the then Prime Minister Eshkol was unable to develop a consensus on what to do next. With the reserves mobilized, the nations economy was at a standstill and the tense populace was demanding decisive leadership.

There developed across the country an outcry for Moshe Dayan to return to government as the Minister of Defense. Eshkol, desperate to restore confidence in his administration, took the extraordinary step of co-opting Dayan, his political adversary, into the government. Dayan accepted.

Dayan, in strongest terms, urged an immediate preemptive strike against Egypt (2:345). Dayan perceived that neither the UN nor the US would effectively come to Israel's aid and that waiting would only serve to allow the Arab countries to better integrate and coordinate their forces.

On June 5, 1967, three days after Dayan assumed leadership of the defense establishment, Israel launched a preemptive air-strike against Egypt.

Dayan's plan, initially, was to neutralize the Egyptian air force, destroy their ground forces in the Sinai and again capture Sharm-El-Sheik. However, the Israeli plans and objectives changed considerably as the war unfolded.

The preemptive airstrike was a stunning success. The Israelis successfully evaded Egyptian radar and struck eleven airfields simultaneously as the Egyptian commanders were enroute to work. The Israelis destroyed 309 out of 340 serviceable aircraft (3:152).

However, the Egyptians broadcast that they had destroyed 75% of the Israeli air force and urged the Syrians and Jordanians to join in the attack against Israel. They did. By mid-afternoon the Israelis repeated their performance and destroyed all of the Jordanian air force and two-thirds of the Syrian air force for a total of 416 Arab aircraft. The Israelis lost only 26 aircraft in the day's action (3:153).

With total control of the skies, the Israelis were free to deal with the ground forces on the three fronts. The Syrians limited their action to shelling Israeli settlements from the Golan Heights. The Jordanians crossed the Jerusalem armistice lines and captured the United Nations headquarters on a hill overlooking the town. Dayan staged limited operations against these threats and focused his efforts on Egypt.

He feigned an attack in the northern Negev desert and launched a three pronged assault at Egyptian strongholds in the northern and central Sinai. Contrary to Egyptian expectations that the Israelis would strike deep and bypass fortifications, the Israelis attacked headlong. This drove Egyptian armour from their strongholds near the Israeli border fleeing to the Mitla Pass near the Suez Canal. Unknown to the Egyptians, the Israelis had blocked the pass and were laying in wait for the Egyptian armor. With the Egyptian armor then out in the open desert, the expert Israeli tankers and air force pursued them relentlessly and unmercifully. All told, the Israelis destroyed or captured more than eight hundred tanks in the Sinai.

Though Dayan had not intended it, his forces advanced to the Suez Canal. Dayan did not want to become involved in the international ramifications of securing the canal. However when he learned that his forces were there he ordered them to secure it. Sharm-el-Sheikh fell with no resistance and all of Dayan's original objectives had been secured in four days (5:649).

However, Dayan was receiving pressure from the government to capture Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. Dayan did not favor an assault on Jerusalem for fear of heavy casualties and damage to the religious shrines. Furthermore, he was not enthusiastic about attacking the Golan Heights because the threat to Damascus might bring Soviet intervention. He knew too, casualties would be dreadful assaulting the well entrenched Syrians on the heavily fortified Golan Heights.

Dayan stalled. He sent forces to capture the heights

surrounding Jerusalem which placed his forces in commanding artillery position for the entire West Bank. His air force, meanwhile, heavily strafed and bombarded the Jordanian brigades on the West Bank. The Jordanian forces collapsed and Dayan ordered the capture of Jerusalem with the restriction that there be no air or artillery support to avoid damage to the cities religious shrines. As expected the casualties were very heavy; worse than in the battle for Sinai, but to the Israelis, access to the religious shrines was worth it.

With the Egyptians and Jordanians neutralized, Dayan chose next to deal with the most intransigent of the Arab countries-- Syria. However, mindful of the possibility of Soviet intervention, he ordered action against only the area of the Syrian Golan Heights from which Israel had been shelled. The Israelis attacked the Golan Heights at its best fortified sector. The Israeli Chief of Staff explained:

I chose a narrow frontal assault. It's the most risky . . . but its advantage is that if you do succeed, you soon have your troops in the enemy's rear. This is very important where you're fighting Arabs. Psychologically, they break easily (5:659).

The Golan Heights were a nightmare of fortifications ten miles deep. The Israelis advanced according to plan with continuous aerial bombardment supporting them. For two days the fighting raged with the Israelis incurring very heavy casualties. "Few Arabs survived the onslaught. The Israelis were uninterested in taking prisoners" (5:657). Finally, the Israelis penetrated their sector and found that the Syrians had abandoned their fortifications.

## Chapter Five

### YOM KIPPUR WAR

In the Six Day War, Moshe Dayan instructed his forces not to advance on the Suez Canal, for he was ever mindful of future relations with his Arab neighbors. However, one of Dayan's zealous field commanders seized a sector of the Suez Canal, and much against his better judgement, Dayan acquiesced to political pressure and seized the entire canal (2:465). Dayan believed that as long as the Israelis held the Canal and denied the Egyptians the opportunity to rehabilitate her cities, then another war was inevitable. Since 1970 he had urged that the Israelis withdraw from the Canal and reach an agreement of some sort with the Egyptians (2:465). Dayan was not successful in persuading his political leadership to support this idea.

Dayan, along with the senior political and military leadership believed that the Egyptians would not initiate a war with Israel until they were assured of air supremacy. This, it was estimated, would not occur until 1975. Therefore, though the Arabs had been deployed at full strength along Israel's borders for two years as of fall 1973, Dayan felt that the undisputed supremacy of Israel's Air Force would forestall an Arab attack.

Even against Arab forces that consisted of over one million well-trained troops, over 1,000 first line Soviet fighters, over



5,000 of the newest Soviet tanks and a full array of anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles, the Israeli's were, nevertheless, confident.

During the predawn hours on Yom Kippur, October 6, 1973, Dayan was awakened and informed that reliable intelligence had determined that the Egyptians would attack Israel at 4 o'clock that afternoon (2:459). Dayan assured that the Prime Minister, Golda Meir was notified and convened his staff. Dayan was concerned over four issues (2:460). First, he ordered the limited mobilization of reserves for defense. Second, he disapproved a preemptive airstrike against Syria. He ". . . feared such moves would burden our prospects of securing the full support of the United States" (2:461). Third, he ordered that Egypt and Syria be warned through the United States not to attack. Fourth, he ordered the immediate evacuation of women and children from the frontier settlements in the Golan Heights.

Even with these actions taken, Dayan knew that it would take 24 to 48 hours to fully mobilize the reserves and get them to their positions at the fronts. Therefore, he constantly monitored progress in implementing defense plans.

At 2:05 p.m. Dayan learned that the Egyptians and the Syrians had attacked Israel simultaneously. The Arab forces had staged ". . . one of the outstanding plans of deception in the course of military history" (3:316). For, as Dayan later admitted, ". . . the Yom Kippur War broke over us on the very day we did not expect it to" (2:473). Dayan also conceded that ". . . on this day, Egypt and Syria had enjoyed two advantages of the highest importance:

The initiative in starting the war, and preponderant superiority of forces" (2:474).

By late that evening the Egyptians had crossed the Suez in force. The Syrians had made a powerful drive into the Golan Heights. The Israeli Chief of Staff, General David Elazar, presented an optimistic appraisal of the situation to Prime Minister Meir and her cabinet. Dayan, however, was deeply worried.

. . . I was haunted by the question of what had happened. Had we erred in our basic planning or execution? What had happened to the three basic elements in our concept--the armour, the air force and the canal strongpoints, which were supposed to confound any enemy attempt to cross the Canal and inflict heavy damage (2:476)?

Dayan countered Elazar's appraisal on three points (2:477). First, he said that these were not the Arab armies they had fought in 1967. The soldiers were lavishly armed and well-trained. Second, the Arabs had extensive anti-aircraft systems, particularly SAM 6's, which would limit the effectiveness of the Israeli Air Force. Third, he was concerned over Israel's lightly defended frontier and the time needed to mobilize the population to defend it.

Dayan recommended to the Prime Minister that the Israelis withdraw from the Canal and retire to a second defensive line. Dayan, however, was alone in his assessment. His recommendation to retire was not at all well received. His colleagues could not see the reality of their situation which would become dreadfully evident in the next five days (2:477).

Israel's northern front, along the Syrian border, was the scene of fierce fighting as 800 Syrian tanks penetrated the

Golan Heights defended by 177 Israeli tanks. The Israelis in the north were properly deployed and were able to provide effective return fire against the Syrian forces. The sheer mass of the Syrian forces overcame the Israeli defenses in one sector of the Golan Heights and the Israeli defenses collapsed there. Dayan was alarmed (2:481). Should the Syrians penetrate through the Golan Heights and descend to the plains of Gallilee, Israeli farming communities would be imperiled. Also, it would be extremely difficult to drive the invading forces out of Gallilee, once there. Dayan instructed his air force to conduct a continuous attack, without relent, against the Syrian tanks. Dayan then phoned the Prime Minister and urged that Israel's shattered forces be withdrawn from central Golan to a defensive line on the Jordan Valley. "Appalled by Dayan's breaking nerve, the prime minister said nothing, neither accepting nor rejecting the suggestion" (5:758). For two more days, the Israeli Air Force ceaselessly attacked the Syrians as reservists were thrown into the defense effort. Israeli losses in aircraft to SAM's were very high in providing close air support against the Syrians. Finally, on the evening of October 9th the Syrian initiative broke and they began retreating. They had lost some nine hundred tanks in the three day battle.

In the final battle for the Golan, the Israelis were hit with a "devastating artillery barrage, and a new force of 600 heavy tanks (5:758). This powerful force virtually liquidated Israeli forces in the north. Down to his last six tanks, the commander

counterattacked and the Syrian forces began to withdraw (5:758).

Despite proper deployment and employment, the Israeli forces in the north experienced heavy casualties; but in the end, with the daring and skilled application of "flying artillery", they prevailed. In the Sinai, however, the Israeli's were neither properly deployed nor employed initially. Specifically the Israeli strongpoints along the Suez Canal were not reinforced with armor as planned (2:453). These strongpoints were small fortifications spread five miles apart along the Canal. In peacetime they served as observation posts. In war, they were to be reinforced with tanks to provide a wall of defensive firepower along the Canal. The commander on the southern front held his tanks back six miles from the line of strongpoints, intending to move them forward just prior to the attack. This was a disastrous error (5:755). The Egyptians initiated their attack before the tanks could be brought forward. Almost immediately the strongpoints were surrounded by Egyptian infantry and armor and received withering fire. As the Israeli armor dashed forward, it too was devastated by rocket propelled grenades and efficient Soviet anti-tank missiles. In the first twenty-four hours of fighting the Egyptians had reduced Israeli armor forces to a fraction of what they were at the onset (5:493). Dayan flew back from the front and urged the prime minister to withdraw to a defensive line away from the Canal (2:494). However, Elazar urged that reserve armor be brought against the Egyptians to drive them back across the Canal. Elazar prevailed, Dayan was overruled. Dayan later recounted his thoughts at this moment.

"It seemed to me that the root difference between other members of the government and myself lay in the degree of readiness to face up to reality and recognize its implications" (2:455).

The next day's counterattack by the Israelis was a total failure. The tank crews fought valiantly but the sheer mass of rocket propelled grenades, anti-tank missiles and Sagger missiles again devastated the, heretofore, invincible Israeli armour.

Dayan flew to the Sinai front that evening to meet with the senior commander there:

I got there after midnight, feeling what must have been meant by the biblical "angry, even unto death." After the war had come upon us as it did; after the first day on the southern front when the forces were not deployed in their assigned positions at the proper time; after the strongholds had not been evacuated when there had still been time to do so; now, when we had finally concentrated a suitable force there--three armoured divisions and scores of aircraft--which had battled a whole day, that too had been wasted, frittered away, all for nothing (2:499).

Dayan returned and met with the prime minister to secure her approval on his plan of action (2:500). He was now successful. First, Israeli forces would cross the Suez Canal and attack the Egyptian missile emplacements and attack the Egyptian rear area. Second, the commander of the southern front would be relieved immediately. Third, Dayan would issue a no retreat order to forces on the northern front; they could expect no reinforcement. Fourth, Dayan directed the air force to attack military targets in the Damascus area in retaliation for the Syrian employment of Soviet ground to ground missiles against civilian population centers. Fifth, the prime minister would leave immediately for

a secret meeting with President Nixon to secure US support.

The Israeli forces began their bloody drive to the Suez. Now, however, they incorporated new hard-learned tactics. Dayan observed that "in the absence of immediate technological solutions to the problems posed by these new weapon systems, the answer had to be found in the sphere of battle tactics. . ." (2:507). Specifically, the Israelis found that enemy troops using RPC rockets and Sagger missiles gave away their position through the missile smoke trail. Thus, with the skillful use of infantry along with tanks, and using the tanks more as "snipers" and not as "galloping calvary" it was possible to neutralize or, at least, avoid the devastation of these weapons. SAM batteries were another matter, in Dayan's view. "I do not think an Air Force can overcome them completely, and aircraft therefore cannot give close and effective support to ground forces in an area covered by such anti-aircraft missiles" (2:508).

The Israelis employed these new tactics which, with respect to airpower, translated to keeping their aircraft away from missile batteries. Instead, they drew Egyptian forces out away from the protective umbrella of their missile batteries and unmercifully destroyed them with their expert tank and aircraft fire.

With these tactics, the Israelis succeeded in driving the Syrians well beyond the Golan Heights and in placing a powerful force on the west bank of the Suez Canal, thus trapping the Egyptian Third Army, by the time a UN cease fire was declared.

Though the Israelis had erred initially, and paid dearly for it, they were able to formulate new strategies and tactics to turn the course of the war in their favor.

## Chapter Six

### MOSHE DAYAN AND THE STRATEGY PROCESS

For nearly thirty years Moshe Dayan was a dominant figure in Israel's military and political life. As such he exercised considerable influence in articulating his nation's objectives and determining its military, political and economic strategies. His military strategy and tactics were consciously developed with a keen eye on the political and economic environment in which his country operated. Key elements in this environment were: Israel, itself as a small developing nation, the Arabs, the Soviets, the United States and the United Nations.

Israel needed peace. The country needed peace to develop its land, its economy and to absorb vast numbers of diverse immigrants into its society. Save survival, Israel has derived no benefit to development in diverting resources to military preparedness and war. These, in fact, have proved to be a crushing burden for the country. For example, Israel expended one year's GNP in the eighteen day Yom Kippur War. Therefore, foremost in Dayan's mind was the political objective of peace with the Arabs. Even in the midst of war he was ever mindful of the consequences of Israel's actions on subsequent political relations with the Arabs.

Because of this, he sought to minimize the Arab incentive to



go to war, and provide disincentives where possible. Dayan insisted upon avoiding casualties amongst the Arab civilians. As a result, there have been remarkably few instances of Israeli atrocities. Dayan balked at acquiring Arab territory. It will be recalled in the Six Day War, Dayan did not want to seize the Suez Canal, Old Jerusalem or the Golan Heights. He believed, and time proved him correct, that conquering Arab lands, particularly the Sinai, would inevitably lead to another war. The Egyptian incentive to attack was too great to be dissuaded.

This, then, dictated a military objective of a swift, decisive war in which the Arab capability to wage war was destroyed, but with emphasis on destroying military hardware and fortifications--not people. There were, also, other reasons for Dayan's pursuit of a swift strategy. First, with a population of only three million, Israel could not cope with wars of attrition against its populous neighbors. Second, the Israeli's could not provide the manpower for a large standing army. They relied heavily on reservists. Mobilizing these reservists brought their economy to a standstill. Therefore, Israel simply could not fight a war more than a few weeks in length.

One major constraint on Dayan's strategy was the Soviet Union. He had to conduct decisive campaigns to achieve peace, but not so decisive as to bring the Soviet Union directly into war with Israel. The Soviets, Dayan perceived, would not tolerate the total humiliation of their client states at the hands of Israel. In every Arab-Israeli war since the 1956 Suez Campaign, pointblank Soviet threats of direct intervention weighed heavily

on Dayan's decision making.

An important (probably the most important) constraint facing Dayan was the United States. Israel could not survive without the economic, political and military support of the United States. Israel needed arms and aid from the United States. More than once, the threat of US intervention held the Soviets at bay during the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War. It was important, therefore, that Israel convince Washington that it had done everything possible to avoid war. For this reason, Dayan automatically ruled out a preemptive airstrike on the eve of the Yom Kippur War.

From 1948 on, the Arabs were very effective in using the United Nations against Israel. Whenever it became apparent to the Arabs that they were losing the war with the Israelis they would appeal, through the Soviets, to the UN for a ceasefire resolution. Since Israel could not afford to ignore such a resolution, the Israelis were compelled to move very swiftly before a ceasefire to achieve military objectives which would enhance their negotiating position afterwards.

These objectives and constraints directly guided Dayan's development, deployment and employment of his forces. However, there can be no doubt that Dayan's personality also shaped each of these elements of his strategy (5:479, 4:229). Specifically, Dayan forged a military force that emphasized swift striking power. His emphasis in force structure was on armor and air-power. He insisted on extensive training for professional and reserve forces. To offset Israel's inability to man or support a large standing army, he developed a largely reserve force which

was capable of rapid mobilization. He built the army into the mirror image of himself. NCO's and officers, alike, were promoted from the ranks. All ranks were trained to think and take the initiative themselves. Dayan actively discouraged military decorum. As S.L.A. Marshall described him, "He is the natural man, utterly without side, forthright in speech and in his personal manner, almost a homespun character" (4:228). Dayan's own biography is replete with references to the "fighting spirit" of Israel's armed forces. His bitterest criticisms are of those commanders and units which did not display "fighting spirit" in combat. Clearly, more than anything else, Dayan sought striking power and "fighting spirit" in developing his forces.

Dayan's force deployment strategy was shaped by the realities of Israel's situation. Though Arab forces often remained deployed at full strength along Israel's borders for long periods of time, Dayan could not afford to mobilize the reserves. Therefore, Dayan placed his small standing army on defensive positions along the frontier, and relied upon intelligence to provide insight into Arab intentions. This strategy placed extraordinary importance on accurate early warning of an Arab attack plan to permit sufficient time to mobilize Israel's reserves. This deployment plan was not without its perils as the Yom Kippur War has shown.

In employing his forces, Dayan emphasized the principles of offensive, surprise and maneuver. In war, he struck swiftly at the time and place of his choosing. To that end, his forces relied almost solely on swift armor and air power. He employed

little supporting infantry or artillery for these arms do not possess the swiftness necessary in Dayan's form of attack. His use of maneuver was best exemplified by his tactic of providing each ground force a separate axis of attack. Each commander, therefore, was free to exploit the battlefield situation as he saw fit. This tactic exploited the Arab's greatest weakness--their inability to depart from plans and seize the initiative. Dayan and his commanders exploited this characteristic of the Arab armies more than any other.

Dayan's strategy and tactics served Israel better at some times than at others. In the final analysis, though, the acid test for strategy is how well it achieves national objectives. Israel has survived and prospered against considerable odds. It has not been overrun by the Arabs, invaded by the Soviets nor abandoned by the United States. Dayan served his country well.

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## APPENDIX

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### KEY EVENTS IN MOSHE DAYAN'S LIFE

- 1915 Born in Deganiah, Palestine
- 1929 Joined Jewish Underground
- 1941 Lost left eye in action in Syria
- 1948 Assumed Command of 89th Battalion
- 1949 Promoted to Major General
- 1953 Appointed Chief of Staff
- 1959 Appointed Minister of Agriculture
- 1967 Appointed Minister of Defense